

Dave has had a reply from a 'French member' who generally agrees with the figures quoted in the article. He says it is not too difficult to get 50% of the perfins of some countries but wonders how many collectors have 11,500 different dies of GB: perhaps only 10?

He confirms, that for France, Belgium, Spain and Netherlands, 50% is not difficult: 60% is good: 70% you are amongst the top 5 (at least in France). The largest French collection is a little over 80%: Belgium 75%: World 65%. There are perhaps between 5 and 10 World collections of 50%.

He thinks perhaps only 30% of dies are known on 5 stamps or less. He thinks that the great difficulty with both recording new dies, number of dies known and identities is that, in each country, most of the work devolves upon one unpaid part-time worker, the Catalogue Editor, who could probably not cope if every collector diligently reported his holding of perfins. So we must rely for the foreseeable future on a representative sample.

He agrees there must be better ways of building a collection. For instance he has many duplicates but wonders if he will be offered common perfins in exchange. Again this is made more difficult by there being no priced catalogue, which is back to where we started. [See page 3.]

For myself [Dave], even when I was writing my original article for Bulletin 291, I did wonder if there is a place for a Society Reference Collection, because of the rarity of many dies. We could do it by gift or purchase.

Even as I write this I know there has been difficulties with the ownership of such collections. Would one of each die suffice? What purpose would it serve? Would it be referred to? The subject needs some thought and I for one would need a lot of convincing. What do you think?